Mr. Speaker, I stand here today in support of

House Concurrent Resolution 63 which opposes the President's decision

to deploy 21,000 additional U.S. combat troops to Iraq.

I am also here to specifically honor the Broward County Veterans

Council, who recently adopted a resolution concerning the war in Iraq.

The Broward County Veterans Council represents a host of veterans

groups throughout Broward County, Florida, including the Broward

chapters of the American Legion, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans,

Fleet Reserve, Gold Star Mothers, Italian American Veterans, Jewish War

Veterans, Marine Corps League, Navy League Council, The Order of the

Purple Heart, The Paralyzed Veterans Association, Reserved Officers

Association, Retired Officers Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars,

Vietnam Veterans of America, and World War I Barracks.

The Broward County Veterans Council led by its Chairman, Bill Kling,

adopted this resolution unanimously on January 16, 2007. And the spirit

of this resolution is as follows:

Whereas, the President of the United States has put forth a plan to

the American people and to Congress which calls for an escalation of

20,000 or more of our troops going to Iraq to combat the insurrection

in Baghdad and the Anbar province; and

Whereas, the majority in Congress has put forth several plans that do

not include an escalation of combat troops; and

Whereas, the American people have made it clear they want a new

direction in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

Whereas, the administration's attempts to escalate the war previously

by sending additional troops to Iraq have unfortunately failed to stop

the bloodshed between the Sunnis and the Shia;

Therefore, the Broward County Veterans Council believes that the best

plan is to bring troops home in a phased redeployment so that we may

get them out of harm's way.

Veterans groups, along with families across my district, are very

concerned about the direction this war has taken and are demanding a

change in strategy.

To President Bush their message is loud and clear: This war has been

mismanaged, the strategies for success have failed; our national and

personal security interests, most importantly, are not being enhanced

and in fact may be undermined. And, therefore, they overwhelmingly

oppose President Bush's plan to send more troops to Iraq.

Traveling through my district, people in South Florida are demanding

that Congress ask the tough questions concerning our policy in Iraq.

Well, we have asked these tough questions, and I along with many of my

fellow Members of this House, both Democrats and Republicans, have come

to the same conclusion: The President's plan to increase troops is

wrong.

The administration has based this plan in part on the readiness of

the Iraqi Security Forces to stand up and take control. I have heard

nothing from our military experts that would indicate that the Iraqi

troops are anywhere near prepared to bring order to this troubled

country.

General Colin Powell recently told the associated press, and I quote,

``I am not persuaded that another surge of troops in Baghdad, for the

purposes of suppressing this violence, this civil war, will work.''

And four-star General Barry McCaffrey called the President's surge

plan last month, ``a fool's errand.''

These are some of the experts we should be listening to.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you, as the civil war in Iraq spirals out of

control, as Iraqi Security Forces continue to be ill-prepared, and as

we continue to alienate our allies around the world, what warrants this

administration to continue on the same path in Iraq and add more

troops? So far, nothing.

We have no business sending over 21,000 additional troops in the

middle of a growing civil war. We have no business sending over 21,000

additional troops when, as it is, our military is already stretched too

thin. And because our military is already dangerously pushed to the

limit, we have put ourselves in the precarious position of dealing with

real threats like Iran, while at the same time protecting our allies

like Israel and some other Middle Eastern friends.

For these reasons, I am advocating for a plan, as others are, devised

by our military experts that supports a phased withdrawal of our

troops. But while our brave men and women in uniform are serving, it is

critical that we provide them nothing less than the best protection and

support. We have more than a responsibility to support our troops; we

have a solemn obligation, and that obligation extends to asking the

tough questions and getting our policy right.

In honor of the Broward County Veterans Council and the veterans

living in Palm Beach County, in recognition of their heroism and

commitment to our country, I support this resolution

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Reserve, the Gold Star Mothers, the Italian American Veterans, the

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